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NARRATOR Elizabeth Bixby Janeway

INTERVIEWER Phyllis Lotz

PLACE Mrs. Janeways"s home

DATE Jan. 10, 1982

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Interview with Elizabeth Bixby Janeway
Date of Interview: January 10, 1982, at the Cachuma Ranch, SYV
Interviewer: Phyllis Lotz
Transcriber: Phyllis Lotz

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Introduction: Mrs. Janeway was not eager to do this interview, it took a lot of persuasion for her to agree to the interview but as we talked she became more relaxed and I was able to put her at ease towards the last.

PL: I want to begin with the Bixbys, John Bixby was your grandfather?

Mrs. J: Yes, that's right.

PL: And your grandmother was Susanna Hathaway Bixby?

Mrs. J: Yes.

PL: Do you remember anything about your grandparents?

Mrs. J: My grandfather died when my Father was 12, John Bixby was 37 (when he died) and a very young man.

PL: Do you remember your (Bixby) grandmother?

Mrs. J: No, she died in 1904 or 5, I don't remember her except she was a sever person. I never saw her smile, is this going to turn out like this? because I am just stumbling for words.

PL: Do you remember your mother's parents?

Mrs. J: Oh, yes.

PL: Where did they live?

Mrs. J: Long Beach. My grandparents were named Green.

PL: Do you know how your parents met?

Mrs. J: They met in college and I guess they were in the same class at Berkeley (U. of Cal). He was about a year older

That's where they met.

PL: What year would that be?

Mrs. J: 1891, Agriculture. As a boy he had sisters and they lived there near Long Beach. Long Beach was a long way away from where they lived on the ranch.

PL: Wasn't this unusual in those days for a girl going to college?

Mrs. J: Yes, she always said quite honestly that if it had been anything like college in the next generation she never would have made it. It was a purely memory thing cause the women weren't treated as if they were ever going to do anything with their education.

PL: Where did she (your mother) live during college?

Mrs. J: She lived with her parents, she was a Berkeley girl. I think they (the Greens) started in San Francisco, then moved to Berkeley. Her name was Florence Elizabeth Green and I was named for her, Elizabeth Bixby Janeway. It takes so much space to write it.

PL: What do you remember about your Father?

Mrs. J: The companionship we had, I used to go with him, I do remember one time, whenwent to the ranch when I was about .....I couldn't button my clothes, my dress in the back, he would geata me dressed and he took me, he asked me to go with him. I can't remember much about it but he did take me with him at a very young age. PL: Did you father teach you to ride ;horseback? Mrs. J: No one taught me, no one teaches a ranch person to ride, they just get on

and learn, on ponys and gentle horses. We had a gentle horse. There were five of us, three girls and two boys. Father and Mother naturally wanted boys first, everybody does so we were all named John before we were born. That name was picked out by my Father's mother. Kathrine was born and what a disappointment that was and then I came along 16 months later and my name was to havae been John but they called me Sister for a long time before I got a name. I don't know what I got that name (Sister) and it has stayed with me all these years. My younger sister is three years younger so Father took the three of us with him quite often as we got older. We had a lot of fun on ranch trips up to the time my older sister was 16 and graduated from high school, they kept her another year because she was too young to go to college, but she did go to Vassar and she was awfully glad to get away from riding and the dust and flys, you know all that stuff especially with all the cattle. My younger sister like it (the ranch life) almost as much as I. She married at about 23 I think. This was Deborah.

PL: Was there a boy named John?

Mrs. J: Yes, and finally John came along two or three years later. He died as a result of, at barely 23, he was in a one car accident, he was in the hospital about three weeks, I guess, it was a blood clot that went to his brain. He was a very delightful person, very young. And my other brother, was named Fred for my Father. They are all dead

now but me. I am the last of the five Bixby children. It is kind of funny to be the only one. Kathrine would do this (taping an oral history) veary well because she was into an awful lot of things, civic things and she wrote the books, "A Journey with Father" and "Christmas at Rancho Los Alamidos." Deliberately she wrote "Christmas at Los Alamidos," she said it was not very well done, and she kept the other book, she would write in the evenings and make Deb and me write at night or evening when we got in. Deb did not want to do it and I did not want to half the time so then she asked Kathrine to finish it as Deb had cancer and she wanted it written up because she could not be there to tell her grandchildren. We had so much fun on the trips so Kathrine did that, she smoothed it out of course and added a few things, she wrote very well. And what description! You can almost see what was happening. I remember in that book where it said we went to Johnnie Brian's ranch near Hollister, up in the mountains, foggy and dark and we were lost. We all trailed along, cold, and then someone had a lantern, I don't remember if this was in the book or not, they were looking for us. So we went in and it was just a house, friends of Fathers, a house with a fire going and Mrs Johnnie Brian gave us an alcohol rub, it was late at night and we were so comfortable and Deb slept in front of the fire in the living room on the couch and I don't remember where the rest of us were.

PL: As I remember the story, you took turns sleeping together, two together.

Mrs. J: Yes, because we hated to be with each other. (laughter) Deb and I had the same room for years until Kathrine got married and moved out and then Dev moved into Kathrine's room.

PL: In each of these places that you were passing through on this journey (in the book) your Father would stop and see his friends, he had so many friends, and knew so many people? Mrs. J:

Mrs. J: Yes, and we insisted that he do it. We had had our horses in Piedmont, thats where we were at the time and because he had done it (the same trip) when he was 20 and gotten out of college and made the trip, we thought, well, by gosh, he is getting on and he will soon be forty and he won't be able to do this if we don't do it now, and so he was 40 years old. He was a very friendly person anyway and had lots of friends after a few minutes of talking and they were all in the same business, the ranching business.

PL: So you were glad to get home after that trip?

Mrs. J: No. (Laughter) We had a nice time, we did get a little tired. One ranch, the Naciemento Ranch at now Camp Roberts, they had some cattle work for a day or two so we went around the ranch for awhile and they came on down to the Cojo Ranch which is right over here (to the west) and picked up all but one horse, left three horses, they were pretty tired and come home with one, that's Deb's, my

younger sister's horse. We changed horses at Father's ranch of course.

PL: That horse you rode on the trip, it was your particular favorite?

Mrs. J: Yes, that was Flashlight. He was a little horse and Father gave him to me, about a three year old, he was very small, light but alright for me, but someone had evidently abused him. I don't remember anyone in particular at that time. He was scared of men. Sometimes women are better with horses than men. I always talked to them and they calm right down. It lulls them to sleep but they come along. My dog answers me, whines all the time I am talking to him. (Mrs. Janeway goes to the kitchen stove to get hot water for tea).

Mrs. J: I just burned up the back of the stove, this one is new, electric.

PL: Did you go to college?

Mrs.J: No I didn't want to, I was in the cattle and horse business with Father all the time.

PL: Were you his partner?

Mrs. J: I helped him with my interest (in the business) and at the end he would send me places. We had the same interest, the only one in the family except Deb, she was pretty good at it but she go married at 23 or 4.

PL: It must have been a fascinating life.

Mrs. J: It was a beautiful life, just what I wanted and I was doing a job, just like anyone working for Father. He did

the buying and selling. He did the business part. I did get to be pretty good. I enjoyed it so much. PL:

PL: So all your life has been the tranquil life of a rancher?

Mrs. J: Yes, but I take exception to "tranquil" because there is an awful lot to do and you never get caught up and you are on duty 24 hours a day, in case a horse gets hurt or caught out some where or a fence goes down. I am making this all up but you see what I mean. It is not an 8 hour day by any means. But we are removed from people, hordes of people, I could not stand to live.....

PL: Was your mother a quiet person?

Mrs. J: Yes she was, not active at the ranch. She had her jobs to do, she took us around when we were very little but she did not take part on the ranch. Are you watching the tea kettle?

PL: Oh, yes, and I think it is ready. Pause.....

Mrs. J: Mary McArthur? They lived in Pasadaena and we lived near in Long Beach (this is Mary McArthur Davidge of the Historical Museum) In those days when we were born, me anyway, the phones were just invented, in 1900, things came slow then. We did not see each other as we lived so far away and with no transportation particularily and also that was not our life, we were not socially brought up, I mean we went to parties now and then when Mother could make us but we had friends and as kids we were taken which was a little bit later.

PL: Were you surprized to find the Davidges here in the Valley

when you came?

Mrs. J: No, we were not a close friendship, Mary was almost my age but we had entirely different lives, different parents. Mary and Liz.

PL: Mrs. Mary Davidge of whom we are speaking had recently died, and Mrs. Janeway had taken Mary's birds as a favor to the family. It was nice of you to take the birds.

Mrs. J: I wanted to. I talked to Sue (Mrs Davidge's daughter Susan), I don't know Sue at all but I called her up and if I could give Mary's delightful birds a home, she got me started on one, and she got me started on all these geraniums which I love and you know we were friends in that respect but did not go out together or anything like that.

PL: We were talking about your Father and your helping him...

Mrs. J: I was helping him by being very interested and had the same ideas about things. But never in a book keeping way or clerical way.

PL: Did you learn about the ranch by listening to conversation at the table?

Mrs. J: No, it was not a picked up thing, it was my way of living. I was born with the interest in cattle and horses and that sort of life but I did not pick it up, it was there. You see father's business, I don't remember of course much about...ranches and later on he had several, then later on other things in town. He had all kinds of interests really in Los Angeles. He was interested in diffearent

things and so it was not entirely ranches but that was where I stopped.

PL: Now, this town you speak of....

Mrs. J: When I say town, I mean Loa Angeles, any city I call a town. Holly Thompson say, "Are you going into town, Holly?" and she ways, no, I'm going to the village. When I say town I mean the nearest town like Solvang or Santa Ynez. Thats a village to Holly.

PL: After Kathrine and Deborah married, did you remain at home with the boys?

Mrs. J: Yes, I lived there but I had nothing to do with bringing up the boys (brothers), they were not interested (in the ranch). It was unfortunate that they were born when Father was so busy, he did not have much time for them. He had more time for the girls as we were supposed to be boys.

PL: I'm sure he was not disappointed with you because you had the love of the things he liked, it came from you.

Mrs. J: Yes, born with me, he did not have to tell me or anything like that.

PL: You said that John died early but what about your brother, Fred?

Mrs. J: He died in 1971 from a stroke, only ten years ago. John was in a car accident at 23 which was unfortunate. And Deb had cancer, Kathrine with a stroke, and I'm the only one left. I have a few problems health wise. I was not social inclined what so ever and I'm still not. I think

it's a waste of time (laughter).

PL: What do you like to do?

Mrs. J: I would like to have the time to read, but we have a couple of men now to help up here and one down there and they help each other. So we always have one man here (at the house) when Ed and I are gone. they take turns on the weekends for a day off. On account of Solvang, getting so close and the strangers coming in and the pecular people around now. We don't want to leave e this thing (the ranch house) wide open with out anyone.

PL: It is so different than say ten years ago....

Mrs. J: Oh yes, there are great waves of somthing coming over the cities. There are way too many of us. They say shut the gate and keep every one else out. The new comers (is this going to be published?), the new comers are ruining the whole area, I don't mean all, I don't know any of them because we don't go any where.

PL: They bring their ways here, that are not the old timers ways.

Mrs. J: That was what I was going to say, because when they come in they say, What a lovely town, this is Solvang I mean when I say town, like the old simple informal ways of living and they thought it was a delightful place and then they buy some land, then the build an enormous house, swimming pool, and there is nothing against them but they build exactly what they left behind in Beverly Hills. They do not find that life here so they are spoiling our

life here that we like, not knowing they are doing it. Pause.....

Yes we come through the gate and are home our front yard. We did go way up but we sold that to the Rancheros so we don't have much land left, yes, this is home and I get more and more nervous when I go to town to get whats needed if Ed can't go and then its a relief after the last gate is closed, to get home where it is peacefull and I can sit down.

PL: Did you and Mrs Janeway marry before you came to Santa Ynez? Where did you meet?

Mrs. J: In Arizona, many years before. We looked for places around, several and then this place we liked, we thought it would be good. We had the water shed from Cachuma Creek. The creek heads above our line up there (to the north).

PL: What do you mean by water shed?

Mrs>J: The bottoms, the mountains. (I have to talk with my hands) The water shed is from the creek, it is in the bottom and the hilly country, you know you go up this way to get to the top of the mountains, every thing from the top of the mountains. Ed had to build a fence all the way across about 8 to 10 miles I guess, built it with help and me when we bought this place it was one big pasture about 50,000 acres. Mr. Mathiesen owned it then. They shut off part of it so we could have our own cattle. Glen Cornelius had leased it from Mr. Mathiesen, the whole

ranch before that but soon as we were ready, he came over with a bunch of his men and with us, we removed his cattle and Ed built the fence, so his cattle would stay put. But water shed is just from the highest point of each side along the creek.

PL: Does that creek water always run?

Mrs. J: On no, only when it rains, no water in it now to my knowledge. I haven't been down there for awhile. It has to rain and then fill up the springs above us and then come on down. Cachuma Lake (the management of the lake) and stopped a lot of stuff for us because they condemned 13,013 acres of farm land, not all farm land but the best farm land on the place and they took it away in the beginning, about two or three years after we were married. Just getting going.

PL: Is some of that land under water?

Mrs. J: 1300 cres they took and some of it is under water but they took a big margin around, you see and because we had our own well before that, they used to come in quite often and check the well to see if we were using Cachuma water without paying for it. Cachuma water to me is dreadful. We don't go in there (to the lake), we are very honorable about it but a few cows get in.

PL: How did you discover the Santa Ynez Valley?

Mrs. J: We used to go to the Cojo (ranch) very often or Long Beach but always on (Hwy) 101 and never back here but I guess our friends told us cause it was an old town. Going

from home to Pt. Concepcion would be longer. .

End of Tape, 1 Side 1

Begin Tape 1, Side 2

PL: Did you know Tom Parks?

Mrs. J: Ed and I knew him well. I knew him well. The first time I saw him in Long Beach, he was working for someone and brought out something for Mother. I don't know how old he was but I was about 12 or 13. But I didn't pay any attention, naturally. And then, when Father got the Cojo, course Tom was in Lompoc and he and Father were friends and then Ed was very ill, he was in an accident when we had just been married a year. He was in a car accident and was in the hospital for a month in Lompoc and Betty (Parks) was one of the nurses and was very nice and thats how I really got to know her. I would say, how do you do to her every time we met. I would stay all night with Ed because they were short of nurses. Gee, it was a long time ago and if Ed was restless or something I would sit under the bed where the light was on and smoke all over the place and read and when he got restless I would go out and get Betty. I don't know what they gave him a sedative or something, they would know what to do and I wouldn't. And at midnight, they, Betty and the others were very nice too, would always come and get me, they had their midnight

snack so we became friends and I was very much aware of Betty as a kind, nice person. From then on they were, gee, this was 1944 or 45, Ed's mother came rushing from Arizona to stay here, she was very..... thats when I first met her (Betty Parks) and Tom and Betty were here for picnics and then Tom was quite ill but they came out once more with other people for some kind of gathering, you know, and I had not done anything in memory of him. I waited and I was going to of course, big enough, to show if possible, what ever came and it was several years after. Do you remember when he died? 1976? Betty had all his things and wanted to do something in memory of Tom and I wanted to help her and because of us doing something for Tom so we got in on this (The Parks-Janeway Carriage House) and I always said I would like to help and it would be our contribution but you be the boss, Betty, on account of it's your husband and your idea and so then I stayed back which was the only right thing to do, I mean two bosses would have been dreadful on any kind of deal. So Betty was the boss and put all the time on it and I just helped on the building (which was finished in 1978) and then my (contribution) was to be in memory of Father because when he died, that would have been in 1952, my sister bought those 8 bay mares from Father's estate, the Shires, and in time, maybe in two or three years we got them broken, well one was already broken, and then we went around for a few years with the team to shows with his

name on it (the red wagon).

PL: Did you drive the team?

Mrs. J: When those horses get their heads down, once I had eight and I was sitting up there with the driver, we had an excellent driver, it was at Del Mar and we were exercising around the track and he (the driver) handed me the lines and here it is, here and here, and then complications of pulling this down to turn this horse about one keeping one rein tight, I only did it once because they went faster and faster and I could not hold them back, my strength was was not enough and I had to stand on the floor of the wagon and I was too short and had nothing to push against with my feet, with that great weight pulling me.

PL: But at least you knew the feel?

Mrs. J: Oh yes, but I am so mad at myself for not learning from Don just exactly how to drive, I have several books on it, it's am art of course.

PL: Was the driver, Don, a big man? Strong?

Mrs. K: Yes, he was strong and he had started to work for Father in 1927 and was with him a long time, Don and I were good friends and Father used to send me off with him, he trusted Don to the extent of taking his daughter here and there. We were very good friends. Anyway, the day my sister died with cancer in 1959, Don died too, I think an over indulgence to alcohol but he was an awfully nice man. So that was the end, I had already had contracts to go to Del Mar to do another circuit, you know, Del Mar, Santa

Barbara, Monterey and then landing in Sacramento. Just the shows and it was fun so many older men who knew Father, knew the horses and it was very nice as they would speak to us. So all the mares are dead now except one and she is in the correl, she is in her thirties. She is out in the pasture with the rest of them (horses) except in winter, I guess her teeth are not good, she gets thin so we bring her in and feed her, her name is Babe. We did make the last circuit and then we did not need Don any more so he left and went to Long Beach where he lived a year or two.

PL: You know, we have many visitors to the museum to see the Parks Janeway Carriage House, it is such a wonderful place.

Mrs. J: I think it is a wonderful collection. Betty's husband was a Ranchero, this I want you to cut out, no, see if I say anything wrong. I don't mean to knock Betty in any way but one of Tom's interests was the Rancheros and the things that Betty has, the badges and all that, that's fine that's what she wanted, but to invite the Rancheros to put their things in there. I did not personally want it taken over by the Rancheros. And I feel that way about it if you want the truth.

PL: I really think that when they, the visitors enter (the (Carriage House) building, they see the Parks and Janeway collections first and that is important.

Mrs. J: They do, and that's what everyone told me, she has one end

and me the other, quite a number of people said we would be right opposite the door as the visitors come in so we moved up instead of exhibited because we thought we had a right to put what we wanted in. We put the harness up front that way and Betty copied it and then she had a way and Betty copied it and then she had a nice place for her silver mounted saddles and I asked if she would mind it if I copied her and she said not at all so we will eventually do that, we get along fine. She has some very good ideas. I have a picture I want to show you what might be appropriate. Don't let me forget. The Rancheros (displays) block all the light which is our fault because they are put against the white wall and there are to many (wagons, etc). There are to many and they swamp you, I think if you came in this way there is a little breathing space between and it uses up space. I am sure that some would like for their wagons but they can't have ours and Betty's they can't have.

PL: If you feel the building needs more light perhaps they could put in better lighting?

Mrs. J: No, I don't think so, I never go at night, but the window light, everything is in front of the windows and shuts out the light, it is awfully dark in there as you go by. We had stored the Rancheros things for many years and we had to return 9 once because we could not get them in, we built another barn for our stuff so those that were here were in good shape, we were entrusted to take care of

them, we never let anybody mess around with them.

PL: Before we close this interview, I'd like to ask what your future plans are?

Mrs. J: I think just what we are doing now, we are comfortable and happy. I get too tired now and Ed has arthritis, we are more comfortable not rushing around and I won't fly, I'm scared, I won't go on a boat because I get seasick. I can't ride anymore so I'm here. I can drive yet. We are happy. We love the area, the wild pigs and the deer and our animals. We have Texas Longhorns and Brahma bulls, Blank Angus, Scottish Highlander, lots of color. People are waking up to the fact that with the Texas Longhorn you get a good cross. One thing is when the heifer has their cross. One thing is when the heifer has their first calf, it is born easier, they don't have too much trouble, don't need help as they are smaller for the young heifer. But they grow strong and have no tick problems or eye trouble. That breed was the ones they drove up from Texas to Kansas in the old days because they could stand the trip. You have picked my subject, Cattle. I had no instruction, girls in those days, if there was anything going on like an operation or something else which Mother and Father thought was not quite proper they they would say, "go on you kids, we are through with you now, I'll call when I need you again." We would be riding, of course, and so then we'd go back to the house and not give it another thought. And then when they got through with whatever

they were doing, we'd go back and we were always included in the drives and the gathering of the drives but the things like an operation or birthing, thats when we were excluded, but we read up on it. We, I'm speaking of me, the other two (sisters) were not so interested. The work was what I liked about it.

PL: It sounds as though you had a fascinating life?

Mrs. J: I have had a wonderful life, just exactly what I wanted really and not a social life, not entanglements in dates or anything like that.

PL: Thank you for giving me this time for the interview.